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# Reaching the Mainsprings of the Wills of People

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To the industrial relations manager, as to the university teacher, there are three fundamental objectives and genuine satisfactions in life: unlock the imagination of the student or the worker; to tap his creative and productive energies; and, both as a means to the other objectives and as an end in itself, to win and maintain the reputation for fair dealing. These are the locks, but what are the keys which will unlock the stores of imagination and productive energies, or which will open up the way to reach the mainsprings of the wills of the workers?

## Will-Power Versus "Won't"-Power

Production is always a matter, not only of technical ability or muscular power and health, but, more than all these, of willingness as well. great difference between slave or prison labor and free labor is just this matter of willingness, spontaneity, freedom. Very much has been said of "willpower" in recent times by fake psychologists. We are told that it is possible to train will-power just as it is possible to strengthen memory and certain other so-called "faculties" of the mind. But how are we going to create will-power if the scientific psychologists are right in telling us that there is no such thing as will? problem would be immensely simplified if we could isolate some mental faculty called will just as we can isolate the appendix or the pituitary gland and perform an operation on the one or feed the other; but apparently there is no will gland or brain tract labelled

"will." The trouble is that the human will is simply the dynamic aspect of the whole human personality; that is, it is human character in action; therefore, a very complicated affair.

We are all complexes, a mass of perhaps thousands of unit characters which go to make up the whole thing we call the human personality or the human character. Nobody, however, includes in his make-up every element in a perfect formula. At least we all represent individual emphasis upon certain characteristics that may be common to all people. The strata in our character topography run thin or thick, according to certain more or less understood principles of heredity, early training, education, etc.; or, put in another way, our mixture, that is, our character force, may run lean or rich, according to season, and according to certain conditions of our social atmos-Anybody who has ever driven an automobile knows that he gets more power on a moist day. Just so human character, on its energy side, responds to certain subtle elements in the environment.

Since will is fundamentally ideas in action, the great problem of evoking will-power is how to create an atmosphere in which ideas will bloom. If it is will-power, willingness, that we want, instead of "won't"-power, the power of negation and obstruction, we must first learn to drain off the morasses of fear and suspicion which have been allowed to gather about industry. Would it be stretching a metaphor to say that part of the remedy for "won't"-power is the providing of just the proper balance

of emotional humidity and intellectual dryness?

An accepted principle in sociology is that men are ruled more by their beliefs than by laws. It is commonly assumed that the average run of people have certain fundamental "interests," and that the whole social process is simply the interplay of these fundamental interests struggling for recognition. The simple fact of the matter is that absolute interest does not determine human conduct. It is rather what a man believes his interest to be that determines him. Since motive and belief depend in part upon information it is important at the very beginning of analyzing this problem of the human element in industry to recognize the inexorable necessity of telling the truth, of dealing in "pure facts," iust as we insist upon pure food, pure water, pure milk.

"Won't"-power is the product not only of faulty information, but also of balked instincts, of suspicions and repressions, of ingrowing grievances, which result in a whole string of pathological manifestations. Frequently the trick of transforming "won't"power into will-power is performed simply by opening the valves of expression and by allowing, encouraging, or all but compelling the person to get his suppressed emotion or suspicion or fears or jealousies or hallucinations out of his mind. For this reason, if for no other, grievance committees, shop committees, personnel departments, and impartial machinery, to which the workers have access and freedom to state their grievances, are of enormous value quite apart from any theoretical consideration as to their bearing upon some ideal industrial democracy. English long ago learned this value of the safety valve, and any Sunday in the year you can see it working in Hyde Park or Victoria Park, where cranks

almost without number are spouting their grievances. Such freedom of speech and of assemblage, which is the heritage of English and American democracy, is absolutely sound in its application to industry, and particularly to the problems of production. This does not mean that shops are to be turned into debating societies or that forensic eloquence is to take the place of mechanical skill. There are workers, of course, who, like Mark Twain's Mississippi steamboat, cannot whistle and turn wheels at the same time, but for the most part it is safe to say that the feeling of freedom to express one's grievances carries over somehow or other into free action for the whole personality-muscular and mental.

A simple example will illustrate how people are dominated by beliefs, no matter how foolish the beliefs may be. One of the most troublesome things in the clothing industry is buttonhole twist. At certain times it is difficult to get twist of uniform quality, even though the trade designations and numbers remain nominally the same. Sometimes twist on the outside of the spool is of a different thickness from what it is at the center of the spool. In a tailor shop sometime ago a protest was made by the buttonhole makers against their twist. They claimed it was of finer quality than customary and therefore made their work harder. This twist was on white spools. ingenious superintendent conceived the idea of rewinding it on red spools. When he presented it to the workers they accepted the red spools without question and were altogether happy in their work. I do not underwrite either the ethics or the esthetics of this episode, but simply cite it to illustrate how facts are frequently no match for beliefs in dealing with human beings.

#### WHY DO PEOPLE WORK?

Before we can get any farther toward touching the will-to-produce of the average worker we must be able to answer the question of why people work. If you ask the average man why he works he will say, "Why, because I have to," "Because if I did not work I would starve to death," "Because I have a family to support," "Because I need the money," or for some like substantial reason. Joseph Lee, in his Play in Education, answers the question of whether we can ever get away from fear of hunger as a production motive by insisting that even genius waits upon the hunger motive; yet he warns us against taking the whip for the horse, and against confusing a penalty upon idleness with the power to act. If, however, we get away from the hunger motive as the primal impulse to work, we run into a rather vague mass of motives which have been frequently lumped together as economic or productive instincts, or at least as instincts which bear upon the production problem. Professor Irving Fisher, in an earlier number of The Annals, has analyzed seven of these major instincts which industry ought to satisfy, namely, self-preservation, self-expression or workmanship, selfrespect, loyalty, love or home-making, worship and play. He does not work these out in equal detail, nor with equal convincingness, but it is quite evident that some of them are brought into play with the average worker.

### THE ACHIEVING IMPULSE

It is perfectly true that the creative impulse, the full impulse to good workmanship and self-expression in the job are not encountered, yet we find in all industries and amongst all ranks of workers men who are genuinely interested in their jobs, men whom the problems of their jobs really attract,

men who work at their problems outside of working hours and do not actually stow away their interest in the job with their tools at the end of the Management should see to it that this problem interest is not overlooked in the machinery of selection and promotion, nor should it neglect the function of rotation on the job as a means of keeping the worker's mind full of new problems. The ideal state of mind for the worker is the state of mind which marks the real professional man, namely, that his whole working life is an apprenticeship directed towards the satisfying of what Joseph Lee calls the "achieving instinct." Indeed, I think perhaps the whole relationship between a profession and ordinary artisanship is summarized in the idea that a profession is work taken seriously. If the worker can be led to take his work seriously and has been given the proper industrial technique we need not worry about the problems of production. Of course that process of getting him to take his work seriously would involve his thorough initiation into the whole inner meaning of his job, its relation to all the other jobs in his shop, the relationship between his shop and his industry to all the other industries; in other words, it would mean opening up the mind of the worker to his responsibility as a contributory citizen in industry.

## LOYALTY

There is undoubtedly in all men some sentiment of native loyalty. The most disgruntled worker retains some shreds of pride in his shop or his company. Even prisoners will shout for the home team. Loyalty to a union or some other organization by no means crowds out the loyalty of a worker to his shop, and in spite of hostile teaching employees will speak of "our shop," "our bank," "our company." It is re-

lated that a junior member of a large manufacturing firm, who was working his way through the shops in the process of learning the business, appeared one day before the impartial machinery where a question involving the shop in which he was working was being considered. After the case was heard and decided he came into the room and said to the union business agent who was conducting the case for the people, "Say, J., did we win?" This same unconscious, almost instinctive loyalty which made one of the bosses merge his indentity with that of the workers in the shop is a subtle indication of how the streams of loyalty tend to flow unless their course is wilfully diverted. But because of the profound nature of this stream industrial managers must be very careful not to overplay loyalty, nor substitute it for real justice. There has been grave resentment recently throughout the world against such monarchic phrases as "my royal troops," "my brave soldiers," against such autocratic designations as those laid down by a recent great street railway president who advertised to the public the fidelity of his "loyal servants," meaning the street car conductors and motormen. This degradation of the loyal impulse by feudal absolutism must not be confused with the free loyalty inspired by a democratic ideal and fair dealing.

There are certain characteristics in human nature, call them motives or interests or what you will, to which an appeal may be made with good chances of successful production response. There is that somewhat vague thing which we call a sense of common decency. Of course some men rejoice in an attitude of splendid sinfulness, but, for the most part, men want to be decent, and when absenteeism or tardiness of loafing is presented to them as an offence against common decency

and self-respect they will usually agree and attempt to make amends. A sense of artistry, of real pride in work can be evoked and developed. An appeal to fair dealing, in which all parties to a dispute lay their cards face up on the table and tell the truth absolutely will almost invariably hit the mark. A particular case will illustrate this point. A man was brought before me on suspension some weeks ago by the director of one of our lunch rooms. He had taken an extra dish of fruit and poured it into the one which was commonly served with a meal, and tried to get away with it without payment. was checked, began to dispute, and finally threw the dish on the counter, incidently slopping the food all over the place. His tray was taken away from him and he was suspended from his job. He admitted his fault readily enough, but real conviction struck home in him only when I took out of my files the complete financial report for that lunch room and showed him the red figures which indicated the weekly losses which the firm suffered in its efforts to provide a wholesome meal for the workers. He then saw how every slight item of waste added to that column of losses. He got the point at once, shook hands, and went back not only safeguarded from repeating his offense, but also lined up as an understanding employee whose production record will not suffer because of nursing a personal grudge or harboring a suspicion that the firm was profiteering in its lunch service.

Whether these various impulses are instincts or not, or whether there is really any such thing as instinct or not, there are undoubtedly certain underflowing mainsprings of behavior, certain well directed channels through which life's energies normally flow. I have hinted at some of these channels. The genius of the labor manager

will be tested by his ability to map out human topography in such a way as to reveal clearly not only the general watershed but also the particular channels.

## SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT PLUS SCIENTIFIC EVOCATION

Scientific management has been criticized primarily because thus far it has focused itself mainly upon the handling of materials rather than the handling of men. Where it has fallen down in the handling of men is primarily that it has not yet reached out beyond the two chief incentives of wages and promotion in the effort to line up men for efficient production. wage stimulus of scientific management is, as we have already indicated, only a small part of the possible motivations, interests, and stimuli which must be applied to secure the wholehearted response of the workers. The appeal to produce and to take responsibility have, as Helen Marot points out, "never reached the consciousness of working men for the reason that it is impossible to feel responsible or to be responsible where there is no chance of bearing the responsibility." Miss Marot further charges that the great defect of scientific managers is that they have failed to distinguish between initiative and short-lived reaction to stimulus. She herself overlooks, however, the very simple psychological fact that no one stimulus, no matter how vivid or pressing, can hold the attention and interest of any one of us for more than a short time. matter how inherently attractive the particular problem or job, sooner or later interest flags. For this reason, and also because scientific management is still young, all we can say is that the art of industrial motivation is still in its rude beginnings. Because modern civilized man is a very complex being, because industry is a very complex thing, and because interests and attractions engage in such fierce competition the most astute general-ship and fine sense of discrimination have to be used in this process of evocation.

### PRODUCTION FOR PRODUCTION'S SAKE

Sooner or later in the production game we are brought up with a round turn against the worker's frank, somequestion, "Produce? times brutal Turn out more work? Why should I? What's the use? If I work more I simply work myself out of a job or line the bosses' pockets"; or, "I have got enough anyhow; I don't need to work any more." This gets down to bed-rock. Why, after all, should men produce? Is there any virtue in producing for production's sake? Of what value is it, once you get away from certain fundamental articles of food, clothing and shelter, to make more units of a certain kind of stuff? I am frank to say that if I were a worker. turning out some of the cheap gimcrackery that is made just to sell or play with, and which fits no fundamental human need. I should answer that the only reason which would lead me to produce would be to get more for myself. I am equally frank to say that I can see no way of getting over to the workers the full stimulus to production until they are convinced that the world is suffering from a lack of production of certain basic commodities, and that they, as partners in industry, are responsible for furnishing those commodities. Sidney Hillman told the City Club of Rochester a short while ago that "to get more production, not only for one year, but for always, the worker must have a feeling that he has a citizenship in industry as well as in the political state." That is to say, the worker must understand that in

reality and in truth he is a responsible citizen who is charged with helping to fulfill some great fundamental demand of the people; or, to put it in another way, that he is helping industry to perform a public service. That is, citizenship in industry means not just voting one's self more pay, not just receiving benefits through collective certain action; it means responsibility and some measure of self-determination and self-expression. No technical arrangement of business nor juggling with piecework or weekwork or production standards or bonus systems will get anywhere in the long run unless this fundamental question of creative responsibility is first answered and answered frankly and fairly. Failing that, satisfactory answer pressure for output on highly specialized and subdivided lines may really defeat itself. It is possible to stage routine so as to make it interesting and productive for the time being by applying scientific principles instead of mere rule of thumb, and speed competition teams may succeed for a time; but permanent success can only come if the workers understand the point of this speed, if they are taken into confidence in production plans, if, instead of standing baffled before meaningless production "they are made conscious participators in the creative process."

### ACTIVE VERSUS SILENT PARTNERSHIP

These questions finally reduce to working out some method by which active partnership and responsibility can be assumed by the workers. Some people thrive through the investiture of authority. They court responsibility and develop new capacities under it. Many, however, dodge it, wanting merely to be let alone and to acquit themselves of the day's routine. But even the most casual worker, the most irresponsible, can be brought to some

sense of responsibility toward fellow workers if the proper educational attitude is taken by management, personnel workers, and labor leaders. For example, in a highly sectionalized industry, like the garment industry, it is possible to appeal say to the cutters and trimmers to work overtime, or to sacrifice themselves to a greater or less degree for the sake of keeping a steady flow of work to their fellows in the tailor shops.

It must be borne in mind that merely joining a union will not accomplish, as it were, by baptism and laying on of hands, this sense of responsibility. In two thousand years members of the Christian church have not yet seized upon the full inner meaning of the doctrine of the mystic body, or of the communion of the saints. Hence, every opportunity must be taken in dealing even with organized workers to point out that membership in a union means something more than simply sitting down and accepting all that the union can secure through collective bargaining and the force of numbers. Union membership means real team work; it means real responsibility for fellow members; it means mutual aid on the job as well as mutual aid through strike benefit assessments. It is true that actual participation in the making of labor agreements, and in the administration of those labor agreements as they have been worked out in the clothing industry, tends to create a greater sense of responsibility in the minds of workers. But while much of the burden falls upon modern industrial management for these lessons in responsibility, a very large burden rests also upon labor leaders. They must learn to take the workers into the fullest confidence, just as employers must, in order to give this sense of active and not merely silent partnership, and in order to enable the workers to see the

whole productive process and not simply their own small jobs. If we cannot give the worker an aeroplane view of the economic landscape, nor even a stepladder view, at least we must provide him with a footstool glimpse.

This sense of responsibility in industry, it is safe to say, will never be achieved through warfare. It can only come as the fine flower of long range, broadly conceived, educational effort. You can never make a partner of a man by fighting him or neglecting Men cannot shake hands while balancing chips on their shoulders. There is a tendency, particularly in industries struggling to adapt themselves to working with organized labor. for the foremen and other executives to keep their decks cleared constantly for battle, to keep their eyes open for holes in the enemy's defenses, to dispute, and to fight over petty questions of authority and jurisdiction, to be abnormally sensitive to slights and to affronts, or, on the other hand, to be extremely timid about taking a stand upon some principle of right for fear of spilling trouble. This aggravated bumptiousness, or this shell-shock fear. are not promotive of productive ener-Only a clear purpose to let bygones be by-gones, to forget old scores, to bury the hatchet, and to shake hands in a new coöperative order, will bring about that pulling together which is essential to shop discipline, shop order and productive efficiency.

### HEALTH AND PRODUCTION

Among the fundamental human interests recognized by some sociologists is the dominating interest in health. Now, health, from the standpoint of production, means not only physical health and therefore a desire for good physical working conditions in the shop, but it also means even

more—healthy-mindedness. It was particularly this aspect of the health motive which was so conspicuously lacking at the recent convention of the Industrial Relations Association of America, but which was emphasized very clearly at the last National Conference of Social Work. Safeguarding the physical health of employees through physicians, nurses, rest rooms or treatment stations, acts very much as medical missions do by way of creating good-will, provided of course there is no taint of welfaring, and provided the health staff are really warm human beings. Good working conditions which promote both physical and mental health make a real appeal to the worker, and he will frequently renounce higher pay for the sake of such decent working environment. But good air, good light, good toilet facilities, and these other physical minima have after all only comparatively slight purchase upon the worker in the direction of creating healthy-That healthy-mindedmindedness. ness can only be evoked by removing a sense of being thwarted, by providing against baulked instincts, by satisfying the normal impulses of the individual for self-expression, by removing such old fears as the fear of unemployment, the fear of arbitrary, wilful discharge, the fear of humiliation, the fear of underhanded, malevolent action of enemies, the fear of having something slipped over by the bosses, the nameless undefined fears stirred up by irresponsible spoken and written propa-Only education, telling the truth, taking the workers into confidence, making them participators in fact as well as in name, giving them a real voice in management, will bring about this healthy-mindedness. And, without getting into metaphysical or therapeutic discussion, it is pretty safe to assume that with mental health will come physical health and the releasing of unsuspected creative energies.

### FAITH VERSUS FEAR

It would be very profitable from the standpoint of the whole problem of production to analyze more exhaustively this problem of fear. I am convinced that the greatest single hamper upon production is fear, whether in the mind of the employer or the employee. Too often in the past, and even in the present, fear has been made the main whip to production. But fear is a very unstable and incalculable stimulus or motive. It may result in a steady though not very high nor long range output. It may produce high spurts of production; but it is more likely to cause a drop in production, for the simple reason that physiologically speaking fear constricts rather than releases energy. It introduces toxins into the system which poison and corrode both body and mind. Moreover, as Graham Wallace points out, people sometimes deliberately cultivate the emotion of fear in these rather tame times of ours in order to take a plunge back into the primitive. They will take a dare or "try it on"; they will run risks deliberately; they will "monkey with machines," or they will twist the tail of the foreman, just to see what will happen. There are daredevils in industry just as there are in military life or the movies. Consequently, you can never count on the effect of "shooting a scare" into people. There is. just at the present moment, one particular fear which must be removed before we stand the best chance of increasing production. Recently the pendulum swung far in favor of labor. Now it seems to be slowly jiggling back in the other direction. With that backward swing, an attitude of trying to get even is almost inevitable on the part of the ill-educated employer. To

get real coöperation in production, therefore, it will be necessary to remove all fear of reprisals by the boss or the foreman. If you can prove to the worker that there is no danger of taking advantage of him when he is on the defensive you are likely to get down to real facts and stand a good chance of uncovering an assumed apathy or hardness, and of breaking through the crust and releasing the real interest, loyalty, sympathy and good-will of the worker.

The necessity for appealing to a sense of solidarity and of duty in this business of getting the full productive coöperation of the employee merits further emphasis. Both management and men must learn that every privilege, either industrial or social, is coupled with a duty, that men cannot receive benefits without giving something in return. I have found that this problem crops out in every single case of discipline that I have ever had to hear and administer. People were perfectly willing to enjoy the station whereunto God had called them, perfectly willing to receive the benefits which their union leaders showered upon them, and were content to let it go at that. It has been necessary repeatedly and very pointedly to perform the operation of stitching up the slit between duty and privilege so that every person connected with the industry felt that that industry was more or less organic in nature, and that every person was something more than an atom, or a brick in a heap of bricks, that he was really a vital element, somewhat in the nature of a cell, in that larger organism. This sociological teaching is the responsibility of both management and of labor leadership.

#### THE LONE HAND

Frequently personnel managers have found that men were falling down in

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their production, not because of fears and jealousies or grouches against management or against fellow workers, but for some vague and unnamed This trouble when analyzed (or perhaps psycho-analyzed) proved to be a case of trying to play a lone hand, the result of feeling that the whole world was against the individual, or that every hand was turned against him. I have found cases of this sort which reduced simply to terms of loneliness, friendlessness, more or less of the type which Carleton Parker described as the "homeless, friendless, jobless, womanless man." When such cases are treated fairly and intelligently without any smearing over of welfaring, but through the simple process of demonstrating that a friendlier attitude is likely to beget friendly response, mental health and therefore economic health is restored and maintained. Employment managers have worked out various methods of introducing the new worker to his job and of following up the new worker upon his job during the first few critical days after he is hired, but the personnel manager must be on the lookout for these more subtle cases of profound loneliness, as displayed by workers of retiring, unassuming dispositions. The task of being a friend and of providing friendly contacts is the best specific in such cases.

#### SAVING ONE'S FACE

In workshop or business office situations arise daily, the wise handling of which has an enormous bearing on labor turnover, good-will and production. They may concern mistakes, breakages, contradictions as to supposed matters of fact, petty questions of prestige, jurisdiction or authority. It may be a question of how to get rid of a shop foreman or a recalcitrant union official employed in a shop. It may be that circumstances necessitate a sudden

change of policy or shift of personnel in the face of an unyielding stand on former policy. But whatever the particular form of the issue it usually conforms to the classic puzzle of an irresistible force meeting an immovable object. Something or somebody must At this point comes in genius move. for handling men. That genius consists in saving the faces of the contending parties without sacrificing any essential principles. It is flexibility of mind, resourcefulness, sense of humor and tact. As Keynes points out in his Economic Consequences of the Peace, "A moment often arrives when substantial victory is yours if by some slight appearance of a concession you can save the face of the opposition or conciliate them by a restatement of your proposal, helpful to them and not injurious to anything essential to yourself." This attitude of mind stimulates production—whether of treaties of peace or rubber tires or clothing. It is diplomacy at its best and leaves no scars.

I want to reiterate the point already made, and a point which came out very clearly day after day during the recent Industrial Relations Convention. This is the principle laid down by great sociologists like Lester F. Ward and by industrial engineers like Robert B. Wolf, namely, the necessity of recognizing the curative properties of knowledge and truth. It is particularly important at this period of what looks like an industrial slump that the rank and file of the workers and the foremen too be told the plain facts about business. If we took the trouble to check up with some of the workers we should be astounded at the distorted ideas which they have with regard to total production, costs of production, sales, profits or salaries of management. It is much better to have these facts brought out frankly in friendly conference than to have them ferreted out by stool pigeons or guessed at by fearful, uninformed minds. And it is safe to predict that the truth will not slay all productive interest but will stimulate and invigorate it. Evasiveness or moleeyed secrecy is the refuge of scared or deluded autocracy. Napoleon once said of the French: "Give them baublesthat suffices them; they will be amused and will let themselves be led, so long as the end toward which they are going is skillfully hidden from them." Such was the flimsy and dangerous doctrine which led inevitably to Saint There is another aspect of this matter of telling the truth. man will respect another man who calls his bluff or sees through his cheap pretense, but who at the same time has a sense of humor and refuses to humiliate him. A sense of humor in the service of truth is worlds removed from the old idea of "jollying the workers," and comes as near being a sovereign remedy as men can ever expect.

## WELFARE WORK AND PRODUCTION

Too often industrial managers have placed naïve faith in welfare work as a means of "reaching people"; but as a long history of strikes, ill-will, suspicion, and impaired production have shown, welfare work, as too often conceived, is about the last thing in the world that will really call forth the productive energies of men and women. Two steps are necessary. First, stop thinking of welfare work as some benefaction conferred upon the workers. Think of it primarily as simply the minimum standards of decent working conditions. There is no more reason why an industrial manager should take credit for having installed a lunch room, or health department, or recreation center, and expect hero worship

from the employees to result from those additions to working conditions than he should expect the "Thank you, kind sir" of the comic opera in return for having put in decent ventilation, liberal window space, heating, artificial lighting, or smooth running machinerv. Second, the suspicion must be removed that welfare work or the shop committee or company union is just a stop-gap or an undesirable substitute for something that the people really want more or to which they are en-After this suspicion is removed titled. the management is likely to get support and whatever increment of production might be expected to come from improvements in the physical and mental environment of the shop. It must be remembered, however, that any such increments will come unconsciously and more or less automatically. Therefore the management must not be disappointed if no conscious expressions of gratitude are in evidence. Industry must be content with the more subtle expression of the effects of sound management.

It would appear, then, that human topography shows certain elevations and areas and channels other than those commonly associated with what we recognize as response to financial incentives in production. Human behaviour favorable to production can be touched off by motives other than those of money. Yet having said this we must not be misunderstood as saving that the other impulses in human nature, such as loyalty, team-work, or curiosity, or emulation, should be fed up or overplayed at the expense of fair and generous wages. The secret of sound management is to keep all the channels of normal human impulse free and open, to utilize them all, and to reward them.